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## ***A Dead Hero Is the Poorest Sort of a Husband; Boots Rogers, Hero Extraordinary, Learns Lesson***

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Photos by Francis E. Price.

Upper picture: Boots Rogers, at extreme right, standing beside automobile with detectives with whom he worked on the Phagan murder mystery. Lower illustrations: Rogers at time of the Frank trial, his daughter, Louise, and his wife, who formerly was Miss Louise Petty.

**By Britt Craig.**

The little clock ticked impatiently between the statue of the market girl and the boy with the finishing rod on the mantelpiece. The folding doors were closed, and the shades came plumb down to the sill.

W. W. (Boots) Rogers got down on one knee in appropriate attitude of humbleness on the flower-bordered carpet of a north-side parlor not so awfully long ago and said to the maiden, who blushed and fidgeted on the sofa:

“How’d you like to get married?”

“It wasn’t so eloquent as the proposal in the third act of ‘Lovers. You and I,’ but it amply conveyed its fullest meaning. It was with some difficulty that the blushing maiden stammered this reply:

“Sure, ‘Boots,’ just as soon as you quit being a policeman.”

She could have told the humble swain at her feet that she must deign his proposal because of an earlier offer which she had accepted from the Earl of Denmark, and Boots would have been

no more surprised. He jumped to his feet, flicked the dust from his knees.

Then this:

“But why quit the police force?”

“Oh, just because.”

“But that’s purely a woman’s reason and it’s ridiculous.”

The maiden’s nose tilted skyward and she pouted, which isn’t unnatural in maidens even in those who are receiving proposals of marriage. Considering the fact that but a moment previously a very worthy young man had entreated her to become his bride, she was legally, probably, unquestionably entitled to pout, or most anything else.

## **WOMAN’S REASON IS GOOD ENOUGH.**

“Well, I guess if a woman decides man’s wife, she has a perfect right to give any kind of reason she wants, woman’s reason or not. And besides, I guess a woman’s reason is as good as anybody’s, I do.”

“Very well.” Resignedly. “Have it your way. But don’t think for a minute that when I turn in my resignation purely on the grounds of ‘Because,’ that the chief will accept it without investigation. We have some kind of system even in the county police department, you know.”

“But the chief doesn’t have to know anything about it. You just quit and be done with it.”

“Great! You ought to be in politics. You could just do things and be done with them.”

“All right, then—have it your own way. Remember, young man, I don’t have to marry until I get good and ready.”

"Now, listen, Louise, you don't understand. Being a policeman's honorable—"

"I know that—"

"And upright—"

"I know that, also."

"It pays well—"

"And I know that."

"There's nothing disgraceful about it."

"But, it's not that; it's none of those. You're just a great, big fool when you're in uniform, and you'd do most anything on earth and try to get away with it. I don't want them to bring in my husband a corpse the first week we're married. He's got to be alive—absolutely alive—and I positively refuse to have any other kind."

## **LIVE COWARDS**

### **V. DEAD HEROES.**

"See, Boots; I'd rather have a live coward than a dead hero. Live cowards can make some kind of a husband, at least an excuse for one, but dead heroes don't make anything but widows—and—orphans."

"Oh! Now, you're snowing right." (This with elation.) I'm beginning to catch your drift."

"I knew you would. You see. I didn't want to tell you until you made me. I was afraid you'd get the swellhead. It's so easy."

"But I'm no hero—I don't get in danger. I'm just a plain, ordinary policeman—a county policeman, at that. You women ought to stop readin' novels."

"But, Boots, what about that time the negro shot at you at the oil mill?"

“Oh, I forgot that.”

“And the time you drove that automobile at that crowd of burglars?”

“That, too. My memory’s bad here lately.”

“Also the time you jumped off your motorcycle into that crazy automobile?”

“You don’t expect me to remember everything?”

“And that time your automobile ran off the bridge?”

“Oh, I remember that occasionally.”

“Now, listen! I wouldn’t mind you being a policeman, dear, if a policeman didn’t have to police like they do. To tell the truth, I think you look good in uniform—especially the one you wore last summer. But, as I said just now, my husband’s got to be perfectly alive with good prospects of staying so for a good, long time.”

“I get you!”

“Then, are you going to quit?”

“Are you going to marry me?”

Curtain.

## **A WOMAN’S BECAUSE, THAT’S ALL**

Twenty-four hours later, Chief Zack Rowan, in his office at county police headquarters, receives a resignation from one of his motorcycle staff, for which he cannot account. There are no grounds to it, no reasons, nothing.

Except—

“Because.” That’s all.

Next Sunday the society columns announce the engagement of Miss Louise Petty to Mr. W. W. Rogers.

Which brings on more talk.

During his several years' service as motorcycle patrolman with the county police department, Rogers gained the wide distinction of the nerviest and most daring man on Chief Rowan's staff. Many have been the times the chief has gone out of his way to bestow praise upon the dauntless youth who grazed death so frequently that he was on speaking terms with it.

The career of Boots has been entertainingly varied. He served as a sharpshooter in the Philippines, as sailor on a man-o-warsman and as a private detective. Finally, as county policeman. The God of Fate, who seems to be partial, more or less, to the courageous has been good to him. He is still this side of thirty without a gray hair in his dome.

It was during the famous Buckeye oil mill barricade that Rogers won his first laurels of heroism.

A negro desperado, wild and drug-crazed, who had slain four of his race in the Buckeye plant, had sought refuge in the loft of a vacant dwelling out near Pittsburgh, the scene of the famous riots of several years ago.

With pockets overloaded with ammunition, a repeating Winchester and revolver at his service, he pumped lead in defiance, in the faces of the two mounted policemen who first reached the spot. An emergency call for reserves was sent to headquarters of both county and city police departments.

Rogers and three other motorcycle men were sent from the county force. Arriving at the negro's stronghold, they were met by an auto filled with reserves sent from police headquarters on Decatur street. In the machine was Detective George Bullard, who since has been promoted to sergeancy.

**EVERY BULLET SANG**

**A FUNERAL NOTE.**

George evinced no hesitation in attempting to rush the negro's fort alone. He barely realized his mistake in time. As his foot reached the front doorsteps of the barricaded dwelling house, a bullet sang through his hat, while other played a funeral roll about his feet.

The detective jumped for shelter with an exclamation that had something to do with the futility of such generous warning, when one shot—probably the one that went through his hat—would have been a Lord's sufficiency. George prudently turned his footsteps toward a considerate oak tree and the job over to whichever applicant who might be brave—or foolish—enough to tackle the black brute and his bullets.

"It's up to some unmarried guy," he said. "My endowment policy won't permit it."

Rogers was standing behind the automobile that had brought the men from the city headquarters, blazing away at the shattered plane from which protruded the outlaw's gun, verbally and pistolly trying to consign the hapless negro to every kind of eternity from fire and brimstone to a hereafter of nakedness in the frozen arctic.

After the unfortunate gentleman behind the barricade had been doomed to Hell, Hull, Halifax and all intermediate points, Boots emerged from behind the machine, his ammunition and profanity at low ebb.

"I'll get you, you blasted blister on a snake's skin. Getcha head back in 'at hole."

This from behind several trees as Rogers skirted the yard and reached the building in a precipitation of bullets.

"Thank God, the poor fool isn't married."

**BOOTS EMERGES WITH  
THE SHIVERING SMOKE.**

When Boots emerged, he dragged a shivering negro by the collar. All the outlaw desperation and bravado were gone. His Winchester and revolver upstairs with his ammunition. All he now had were a set of chattering teeth and a prayer for mercy. Rogers had caught him unawares through the trapdoor that enters into the loft. And, even a desperado, as desperate as they may sometimes get, isn't going to start something when the "drop's" staring him in the face.

It's like turning your four perfectly good sevens over to a royal flush when the joker—bless his heart, even though he is untrue at times—is completely out of the deck and over in the discarded "strips."

That placed the first feather in the Rogers cap for police duty.

Then, there was the time he drove four policemen and a helpless police reporter into perfect hail of burglars' bullets out on the north side at an hour of night when all respectable folks are supposed to be in bed. He had charge of Chief Rowan's car, at the time, and was loafing with the big machine down at police headquarters.

It was about 3 a. m. when a message came over the telephone that burglars were robbing a store out near Pryor street and Georgia avenue. Rogers offered to carry the reserve men out in the chief's car, which stood outside at the curb. Three motorcycle men, a captain and police reporter for a morning newspaper jumped in.

As the car neared the scene of burglarization, Rogers cut out his engine and lights and coasted down the slope. Barely had he reached sight of the building than two men—lookouts stationed on the corner—opened fire, Policeman Anderson, who sat on the front seat, was first to return the shots.

**NEVER SIT ON  
A RED LAMP.**

Captain Mayo and Policeman Watson, sitting in the tonneau, also opened up. The reporter—unarmed, his revolver having fallen prey to the sign of the three balls—did the only logical thing he could expect to do under the circumstances. Which was climbing over the back of the tonneau and sitting upon the red lamp. There are scars, yet. What more could you expect of an enterprising red lamp?

The two lookouts were augmented by three others who came from the building. Fire from five burglars is generally supposed to be enough to repulse three ordinary men, and, undoubtedly would have repulsed three perfectly good policemen on this particular occasion, had it not been for Rogers, who threw in his engine and drove the car directly into the fusillade.

The burglars probably took fright more at the onrushing automobile than they did at the pistols. They scattered in all directions, ducking into a big touring car that stood, engine running on the shadowy side of the street. The car was off before Rogers could swerve into the center of the road. A few shots were exchanged, but the burglars had escaped before pursuit was possible.

Also, there was the time Rogers, unassisted, unaided, unabettled, leaped from his motorcycle into the driving seat of a runaway automobile, saving the life of a wild and hysterical gentleman and \$1,500 worth of 1910 model automobile.

Boots was patrolling his beat along Pace's Ferry road, a favorite route for speed-fiends who have money enough to pay for the gasoline and sufficient lightness of the head to take the risk. Jerry M. Fields, a resident of north Georgia, who owned a car that went quite cranky at times, was bowling along at a goodly pace on his way home.

## **ROGERS SPRINGS OUT AN AUTO HERO.**



Something went wrong with his engine. Either that or Mr. Fields lost his head and absolute control of said engine. Evidently the latter, as Rogers afterwards said he found no difficulty in shoving in the clutch and using the emergency brake. Anyway, the car dashed down the river hill like an “anti” out of an equal rights convention.

The machine shot by Rogers on his motorcycle. He speeded up, overtaking the runaway near the river bridge. While both machines were running at a dizzy rate the policeman left his motorcycle, clung to the tonneau of the swaying automobile and crawled to the steering wheel. In a moment the car was at a standstill.

Returning to town, Rogers could find but few who would believe the story of this late heroism. However, he had a badly bent and battered motorcycle for substantiation and the business card of Jerry M. Fields, Jackson County, with a cordial invitation to call around whenever in the vicinity.

And, there have been many other times, including the incident when he toppled over a bridge at Peachtree creek trying to outrun a speeding automobile that outdid the law by at least twenty excess miles an hour. They had to fish him out and parts of his motor are still in the creek.

Then he fell in love. And what love can't do, it behooveth no man to undertake. In the words of Boots:

“A guy—some guys—can do most anything and get away with it, but when it comes to trying to outdo love and a woman, there isn't a chance—a bit of a chance.”

By the way, Rogers is now doing office work—tame, but safe and compensating.

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